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*Support and Techniques  
for Empowering People*

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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S T E P . I n c .

Richard M. Smith  
Chief Office of Engineering and Technology  
Mail Stop 1300  
Federal Communications Commissions  
2000 M Street, Suite 480  
Washington DC 20554

1501 14th Street West

Dear Mr. Smith:

S u i t e 2 1 0

I am writing you concerning the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rule Making on ultra-wideband radio. As the Program Director of an agency that supports over 500 families and individuals with physical and developmental disabilities in 11 rural counties, we are encouraging support to make this technology available to families in Montana and across the country.

Billings, Montana 59102

STEP Inc. is a non-profit agency who's mission is to "Enhance Human Development Through Community" for persons with Developmental Disabilities. Many of our clients live in the community with families, while many others reside in their own apartments. Society is aware of the inherent risk of living in the community. The risk is far greater for those persons with disabilities. Frequently we experience persons being exploited, injured, victimized etc. while in their communities. All too often these risks can be minimized with proactive planning. This technology could be a critical component that would assist persons to be safer and inevitably more independent. Our intent is not solely to support persons to be safe, but also have a meaningful quality of life. Technology that could assist persons to live without costly support of on site persons is a cost efficient and effective use of entitlement funding. More importantly, it's what our clients want!

(406) 248-2055

Persons with Disabilities need to have choices which can allow them the privacy and dignity of being safely on their own in the community of their choice. All too often persons overseeing our clients will not allow them to exercise choice to live alone as they believe their to be vulnerable. For many this technology would make it a potential reality. Let me share a few moments in the lives of some persons who may have benefited from this technology.

1-800-820-4180

FAX (406) 248-1493

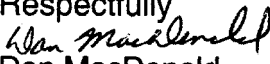
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We supported a young women with mobility and weight problems who frequently was confined to her home. On occasion she fell in her apartment and was unable to get up from the floor. She was frustrated and frequently embarrassed, often times having to lay in her own urine, unable to make it to the bathroom. Funders of our program and team members thought this was very unsafe and recommended that she be placed in a nursing home or Institution. This technology could have made her apartment much safer and the community the preferred place of residence at \$18,000 annually rather than an institution at \$110,000 a year. Unfortunately she passed away this spring from a heart attack in her apartment. Had she had access to this technology maybe she'd still be here with us today.

Another young women was cooking in her apartment when she accidentally caught her shirt on fire. She was trained in the use of her fire extinguisher but was unable to use it during her crisis. She had second and third degree burns over 40 % of her body. She lay on her front lawn for 25 minutes before someone would assist her. This technology could have been the difference of relieving help in a more timely manner.

Another man living in a very rural part of Montana was riding in his electric wheelchair on the way home from a friends house. As he went over a cattle guard his chair wheels wedged in the metal supports. He remained there the entire night until his neighbor saw him as he went to feed cattle. This man was humiliated, cold and down right embarrassed. Once again this technology might have prevented such an experience.

These are but a few of the examples of how this technology might have made a difference. STEP Inc. has supported persons for 28 years in Montana. We strongly encourage you on behalf of those persons to support the development and use of ultra-wideband technology. Helping persons to be a part of their community is a responsibility we all share.

Respectfully  
  
Dan MacDonald  
Res. Prog. Director  
STEP Inc.